The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

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PRAYING ALWAYS.

Soul of our souls, only by Thee
The way we see
Through earth's entangling mystery.
We nothing know;
But prayer unbars heaven's gate, and Thou dost show
The one sure path in which we ought to go.

And this is prayer: from self to turn
Thee-ward, and learn
Our life's veiled angels to discern.
Filled with Thy light,
We hate the dawning evil, love the right;
Awake with Thee, there is in us no night.

Were ours the wish, as vain as strange,
Thy will to change,
Or Thy least purpose disarrange,—
This were not prayer,
But only a rebellious heart laid bare,
Insanely choosing curses for its share.

Thou present God! to Thee we speak:
Weary and weak,
Thy strength divine we struggling seek!
Thou wilt attend
To every faintest sigh we upward send,
Thou talkest with our thoughts as friend to friend.

The battle of our life is won,
And heaven begun,
When we can say, "Thy will be done!"
But, Lord, until
These restless hearts in thy deep love are still,
We pray thee, "Teach us how to do thy will."

We cry with Ajax, Give us light!
A glimpse, a sight
Of midnight foes that we must fight!
They hide within,
They lurk without, the subtle hordes of sin:
By mortal might shall no man victory win.

The prayer of faith availeth much;
Thou hearest such;
Thy hand we in the darkness touch.
Oh, not apart
Stay'st Thou on some high throne, all-loving heart!
Helper in times of need we know Thou art.

Nor nursing each our own distress,
To thee we press;
Prayer's overflow drowns selfishness:
Soul within soul,
One voice to thee our linked petitions roll;
Healer of the world's hurt, oh, make us whole!

And, when arise serener days
Whose air is praise,
The song of thankfulness we raise
On high shall be,
Not that to some vast All we bend the knee,
But that each soul have one sure friend in Thee.

Soul of our souls, with boundless cheer
Forever near,
Our being's breath and atmosphere,—
The world seems bleak
Only when shelter in drear self we seek:
The joy of life is, man to Thee may speak!

—*Lucy Larcom.*

THANKSGIVING.

II.

But let us see what is *not* included in the mere necessity of life,—what proofs of God's actual love and tenderness to us may be deducted from the conditions of our existence, and that existence still left untouched. Let us suppose that the senses ceased to convey *pleasure* to our brains, that the food

which hunger made us eat had no taste, the sounds which guided us had no sweetness, the odors no perfume, the sights no color. Let us suppose a world in which there was still light enough to plough and reap, but over whose sky stretched one unbroken cloud, through which no sun ever shone to brighten with its noonday glory or hallow with its evening lustre, and through whose nights no moon or star ever opened up the infinite to the gazer's heart. The earth is all colorless, the waters gray like lead, grass and corn and trees are all one hue, and there is no flower save the black scentless blossoms of the tasteless roots. The birds have no song, the insects no merry hum; there is no such thing as music, nor the sweet, soft voice of human love and human wisdom; man has no converse with his kind, for he has no joys of intellect or affection to convey. He loves no one: his words are merely a call or a command. There is no literature, no art, no virtue, no religion. But there is life left? Oh, yes! abundance of life. The creature lives out securely his threescore years and ten; for he is goaded every moment by a want which he is always able to supply, and to end his existence would be worse pain than to prolong it. So man lives on in that great silent, sunless, loveless, Godless world.

Now suppose, reader, that you were brought from some planet where existence was such living death as this, and that God took you and placed you on our radiant earth, some summer morning, while the sun was rising over the sea and the woods were glittering in the dewy light, while the birds were pouring forth their songs and the fragrance of the grass and flowers filled the air with sweetness, suppose that you entered a human abode, and saw in one chamber a mother caressing her child on her breast, and in another a youth poring over pages fraught with noblest thoughts, and, yet again, in another a strong man on his knees wrestling with all his soul for the strength to do some great right, and grasping in his faith that Hand which can do all things till at length the victory was won, and the loving heart broke forth in praise and adoration,—suppose you could see these things with the eye of one who saw them for the first time, would it seem to you that a *few* words of thanks dismissed justly the claims of God's tenderness on his thrice-happy children?

But, as I have said, there is a greater cause for our gratitude to God than the pleasures of this palace-world he has built for our present abode. Beyond it lies boundless, everlasting life. We are not made for this happiness alone, great as it is. It is but an accident of the road, a *mere* world of joys thrown into the great design! What we are made for, what we shall all reach at last, is a height of being, a virtue including such love, such joy, that, could we see it now, our dazzled sight would never more perceive either the pleasures or the trials which belong to mortal life. God throws our immortality into the background of our consciousness, probably because, were we clearly to behold it, there could be no salutary punishment, no strengthening trial, in our earthly lot. We should feel such things no more than we heed the little pebbles which lie under our feet when we spring forward into the arms of a long-parted friend. But, though our immortality cannot now be realized by our feeble brains, it is still *there*, it is waiting for us. In the eye of Him to whom the future is as the present, we are even now the blessed creatures we shall be hereafter,—pure and good and strong, beyond our highest aspirations. Love of God and of the myriads of our brothers will swell with rapture the vast expanse of our hearts, while our minds will grow in knowledge, God-like and illimitable, as we roam from world to world throughout the clusters of the suns, doing indeed at last "the will of our Father, even as it is done in heaven," and growing ever more "perfect even as he is perfect."

Rightly comprehending the meaning of our existence as an everlasting progress, in which happiness is only the secondary, and virtue the primary end, we shall also be better able to estimate the value of those blessings which tend more directly to assist our moral life. Of course, *all* that God does for us helps this great design for which he made us at first, clothed us with garbs of flesh, and built for us this planet home. We may take everything that preserves our animal life, everything that assists our intellect and our affections, as God's instrument to bring us onward and upward. The *necessaries* of existence do this by affording a ground for the moral life. The *luxuries* which add happiness to that physical existence do it by warming and encouraging the better sentiments of our nature, proving to us God's tender care, and offering us opportunities of self-sacrifice for others. Further

yet, besides the necessaries of life and the joys thereunto added, God helps us by *sufferings*. These are often the very best helps, and consequently the best blessings of all, healing our sinful hearts and making us advance with tenfold rapidity on the path toward our glorious end. Hereafter I doubt not, when we look back to earth from the high spheres of our future being, we shall all thank God most fervently for these very sufferings. The memory of the dear homes of our childhood, of the scenes of requited affection, or of honest joy in the success of noble labors,—even these will fade before the still more grateful recollection of the sick-beds where our strength and health were struck down, and of the graves where our dearest human affections lay buried.

And yet further does God help us, and more powerfully, more directly, than by suffering itself. Over the chaos of our conflicting will and desires his Spirit broods, "moving on the face of the deep," and stilling into sunniest calm the night storm of those howling waves. For the inspiration which has enlightened the conscience, for the grace which has melted and purified the heart, who shall thank God enough? Who shall count the value of each holy thought, each tear of penitence, each throb of aspiration, which he has caused to start in the darkened mind, the hardened conscience?

Let us hope that these *spiritual* blessings at least are rarely received thanklessly. Perhaps their most unfailing result is to flood the soul with a sense of gratitude unutterable, while we think that to sinners like us the holy Lord of heaven stoops to give his aid.—*Frances Power Cobbe.*

THE STILL HOUR.

There is a calm the poor in spirit know,
That softens sorrow and that sweetens woe;
There is a peace that dwells within the breast,
When all without is stormy and distrest;
There is a light that gilds the darkest hour,
When dangers thicken and when tempests lower,
That calm to faith and hope and love is given,
That peace remains when all beside is riven,
That light shines down to man direct from Heaven.

—*Hymns of the Ages.*

Saint Paul urges no extravagance of charity. He states that there is no obligation on any one to reduce himself to destitution that others may live at ease, but that still it is the mission of Christian principle and love to tend to that equality which the physical laws of the universe do not produce. We are often tempted to say, when we look upon the inequality of human condition: Is God impartial? Is he an equal Father? Is the gospel doctrine true? But we should rather ask: Have we acted as the children of that equal Father? Are the marks of his spirit upon us? Have we recognized one brotherhood? God's object in life is not by material distributions and measurements to exhibit his own paternal character in unclouded light, but to educate our spiritual nature, and to train to perfect action our filial and fraternal love. Christian men ought to adjust what for this very purpose God has left unequal.—*J. H. Thom.*

It has been said that we dig our graves in our youth; but a sadder thing is a low-toned, dull maturity that has no resurrection power, and holds on to life from mere animal instincts. The only thing that can help us is a new resolve by which the breath of heaven may fill our sails, and bring us out of the wretched *doldrums* of a soul delayed in the senses into the wide sea and free winds of new life. If we can carry our self-reproach, accepting willingly its burden, knowing that we are not estranged from the love and forgiveness of God, there is a great hope for us all. If we can endure without complaint, and say unto God, "Let the blow of thy mercy fall, only hide not thy face," we may win our destiny and our peace.—*Horatio Stebbins.*

Suffer not your thoughts to dwell on the injury you have received or the provoking words that have been spoken to you. Not only learn the art of neglecting them at the time you receive them, but let them grow less and less every moment, until they die out of your mind.—*Selected.*

Whether any particular day shall bring to you more of happiness or suffering is largely beyond your power to determine. Whether each day of your life shall give happiness or suffering rests with yourself.—*George S. Merriam.*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 2 Kensington Park, Roxbury, Mass.

OFFERS

Will any one who would like to receive "Black Beauty," address Miss Langmaid, 71 Newbury Street, Boston, Mass.?

Any one desiring school-books please apply to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 2 Kensington Park, Roxbury, Mass.

The Cambridge Branch offers the following books. Address Miss M. A. Vinal, 20 Lowell Street, Cambridge, Mass.

Juvenile.

"Little Frankie Series"; "The Banker and the Bear"; "The Training of Wild Animals," Bostock; "Wabeno, the Magician"; "The Autobiography of a Show-dog"; "Fourteen Pet Goslings"; "Roof and Meadow"; "Four Girls at Chautauqua"; "Wonder Book" and "Tanglewood Tales," Hawthorne; "Boots and Saddles"; "The Owls of Olywn Belfry"; "I didn't Hear"; "What is a Gentleman?" "Songs for our Darlings"; "The Book of Folk Stories"; "Silent Pete."

Miscellaneous.

"Tales of Fashionable Life," Miss Edgeworth; "Her Ladyship's Elephant"; "Frederick the Great and His Family"; "Friends in Council," Helps; "Wit and Wisdom of Sidney Smith"; "Heine's Werke" (German); "Gallegher and Other Stories"; "Vision of Sir Launfal" and "Last Poems," Lowell; "Poems," F. L. Knowles; "Christmas Books," Thackeray; "Dionysos and Immortality," B. I. Wheeler; Wagner's "Parsifal"; "The Conception of Immortality," Royce; "Strange Adventures of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," Stevenson.

Magazines.

Scientific American, 1902, 1904, 1905; *Modern Priscilla; Babyhood; Good Housekeeping.*

REQUESTS.

[*Read directions at beginning of Book Club before writing.*]

Those who write to us for the first time must send the name and address of a minister as a reference. Without that the request will not be printed.

1. Through the kindness of some one I have been receiving the *Cheerful Letter* since last April. I like it so much, and know it is doing a noble work. Will some friend please send me "The Five Little Peppers" and other *good* books for boys, ages eleven and thirteen years. I will appreciate it so much. Mrs. A. D. Thomas, Jackson's Gap, Tallapoosa County, Alabama.

2. *Dear Cheerful Letter Friends*,—I have received the *Cheerful Letter* through the kindness of treasurer for several years. Although my requests were nearly always too late to get the books I asked for, I have secured several dear friends through its medium who have sent me good reading and lovely letters. For the past year and a half I have been seriously ill all of the time, under the doctor's care, spending thirty weeks in a hospital, and have undergone three surgical operations. I am not much better, and feel *so* discouraged. Can walk but little, but try to help with the housework, as we are not able to hire. I am alone so much and am very grateful for any reading sent. I should like to receive some up-to-date school-books, especially a grammar, civil government, and a late geography, and United States history. I would love to have a history of Germany and one of France. I thank all the friends who have helped me to pass many lonely hours. Mrs. Jessie Rossmiller, Luce, Minnesota.

3. Mrs. Cora L. Harrington, Swatara, Minnesota, asks for scientific papers and a book of nature.

4. I have three children I will send to school, and, as I have always taught them at home, we have not one book that they will use at school. And, as school-books are very high here, we can appreciate any you can send of the list below. Two are in the seventh grade, and will require books alike. Two "New Complete Arithmetics," by F. L. White; two "The Modern Spelling Books"; two "Progressive Course in Reading Books (5)," by George I. Aldrich; two "American Histories," by D. H. Montgomery; two "Steele's Physiology," Overon; two "Civil Governments," Pierman; two "Geographies" (advanced), Jacques W. Redway; one "Natural Elementary Geography," Jacques W. Redway; one "White's First Book in Arithmetic." Mrs. Lyda K. Spaulding, Yuma, Arizona.

5. Mrs. E. Penn Cheatwood, Agricola, Virginia, asks for Dr. Smith's "History of Rome" and a history of England.

6. Last year the Sunday-school of the Church of Our Father (Unitarian) of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, started a library of children's books. Some thirty volumes were bought. These have all been read, and the new year is beginning with no new books: consequently the library no longer attracts as it did. The Sunday-school's money must this year be reserved for other things. An appeal is therefore made for children's books, not new ones, but second-hand ones if in good condition. Please write first to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, giving the titles of books offered, that there may be no duplications. Rev. Melvin Brandow, 139 East Clay Street, Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

7. Rev. John Askin, Pierre, South Dakota, writes: "If not imposing on your kindness, send the *Cheerful Letter*. There are many here in the Far West who need what it imparts. Any book or papers sent me will be read and then placed in circles where such reading matter will do good. If you will look on the map, you will see that this city is at the end of the North-western Railroad in this State, and for two hundred miles we have what is called the Range Country. Here are vast herds of cattle tended by cowboys. As this is the shipping point, many of these persons from time to time come here, and often stay for days and weeks. So you can see the need for educational and religious work." (The *Cheerful Letter* will be sent, but other papers and books may be sent directly to Mr. Askin.)

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

REASONING WITH CHILDREN.

Assuming that readers of the Mothers' Council have noticed the paragraph at the end of the article in the September number, and understand that government by authority must be gentle and good-humored, never accompanied by impatient and irritable words, we will now consider the objections raised by our correspondent.

We will begin with the illustration she uses: "A child is in the habit of spending her playtime with a little neighbor. The mother thinks the children are growing too intimate, and resolves to put a stop to it. The child, asking 'May I go and play in Ada's yard?' receives for answer, 'No, you want to be in Ada's yard all the time, and I won't have it.'"

This is supposed to be an example of government by authority, without reasoning. We venture to say that an irritable, ill-tempered woman, who gives such an answer as this, is the very one to yield against her better judgment to teasing, crying, and whining on the part of the child. The mother who gives way to bad temper, feeling ashamed of her sharp words, yields the point. The good-tempered mother can afford to be firm.

The point we wish to make is that there should be no arguing and reasoning. In the first place a mother who sympathizes with her child, and has good judgment, will seek to make the deprivation as little painful as possible. To do this it must not be sprung upon the child. Children always feel it an injustice to be refused an indulgence hitherto habitually granted. A judicious mother will call Mary to her in the morning before school and say kindly (not harshly), "Mary, dear, this afternoon I want you not to go to play with Ada." If Mary says, "Why?" the answer should be, "I cannot tell you," or "I cannot tell you *now*" (according to the state of the case). But on no account should a reason be given. Suppose she says, as suggested by the writer, "Ada's mother does not want you," etc. Mary at once replies that she does want her, and has often said so. Then follows, "Mayn't I go this once?" "Mayn't I just go and *tell* Ada why I can't come?" "Mayn't I go if Ada's mother *invites* me?" "*Why* mayn't I?" "Mayn't I invite Ada here?" "Why don't you want her?" "I should *think* you might let me." "You always *have* let me!" and so on, ad infinitum.

If possible, in a case like this, some other pleasure should be substituted; for it is a very real hardship to the little friends to be separated.

We are in the dark as to the reason in the mother's mind, but I will suggest that Mary's mother knows that Ada's mother is not in good health and fears that the noisy play of the two children may disturb her. To say this would merely call forth promises of being "perfectly quiet," given in good faith, but not to be trusted in the least, and a feeling of injury that increases with every stage of the argument.

Again, the illustration of the hoop in the attic. Who that is familiar with children does not know that a child whose mother gives such an answer as the one recorded will reply: "There are no mosquitoes now, so why mayn't I have it? It isn't too large to roll. I can *try* to roll it, anyhow. I won't hurt it. I'll be *very* careful. I'll only roll it here in the entry," etc.

If a mother feels and shows sympathy with her children's little objects and pursuits, if she gives a cheerful and cordial consent to any request that she can reasonably grant, the children will not feel it unkind to have the reasons for refusals withheld.

The writer says her own mother often called her from her play to do an errand, but, if asked to wait until a game or chapter was finished, yielded. This is the wrong way to act. The *mother* should be the one to say, "When you have finished your game," "When you have got to a good stopping-place." To leave it to the child teaches procrastination; but it is just as really prompt obedience to go at the end of the game when told to do so, as to break it off in the middle. In the same way, it is the mother's place, not the child's, to notice when the ten minutes' penalty comes to an end. It is what she is for, and should not be the child's responsibility.

There are times when it is quite suitable to reason with a child, and to explain the purpose of an order; but this is *after* the order is obeyed, not before. L. F. C.

CATS AND THEIR AFFECTIONS.

Kittens differ as much as children in their capacity for amusing themselves and in their demands for amusement. One of Princess's kittens, the White Squall, so named from his practice of standing on the stairs and howling when left alone, was so dependent on others and so exacting that he became a pest. His mother did not care for him particularly, and none of his seniors took a fancy to him. He then fell back upon human beings, and made my life a burden by yelling on the stairs when he could not find me, and tormenting me to play with him when he did. No ball, bell, or string and spool was of the least value to him unless somebody played with it for him. He would climb into my lap, scramble across my book or portfolio, twitch the pen out of my hands, lay himself flat on the keys of the piano, pull the piece of sewing I was at work on, claw my hair down, bite my fingers, worry at my dress and tear it, crawl up my ankles,—in short, bother me out of my life. At the same time he was so gentle and affectionate, and so beautiful, with deep blue eyes and a superhuman expression of innocence, that I could not give him away. He needed a lively child of ten to keep up with him; but, not having one at hand, I brought one of the stable kittens—there were always inferior white ones there—to the house for a play-mate. She was a few months younger than himself, and at first I thought he would kill her in his violent sport; but, finding her unfit for roughness, he moderated it until they played on even terms.

This went on happily for some weeks, until a congenital trouble of the lungs, which we noticed in Blanche as soon as she came to the house, increased. She grew weaker, and Squall measured his frolics to her strength, playing more and more gently as the poor thing's forces declined. At length she could play no more, and Squall betook himself every morning to the kitchen yard, where there were several kittens of low degree, romped and raced with them for an hour, and then came back to spend the rest of the day lying quietly beside his little sick friend. By degrees poor Blanche's breath grew very offensive, and Squall, after kissing her, would withdraw a few feet and lie on the floor in sight of her basket; but he did not forsake her until, seeing that her suffering was severe and her death certain, she was put out of pain by chloroform.

Cats are fond of perfumes and sensitive to bad smells. I have seen them innumerable times jump on a table to smell a basin of flowers and then curl themselves up by it, purring and opening and shutting their claws with pleasure. Among Princess's most charming habits was that of lying in the geranium and heliotrope beds, diffusing fragrance when she came in. They are all, too, fond of a cedar wardrobe, in which there are sachets of orris powder and dry opopanax flowers among the linen. They watch their chance to get into it and hide, often being locked up there in consequence.

The prettiest of Princess's ways was a fashion she had of rearing on her hind legs, pressing her little pink nose against the face that bent over her, and at the same time patting the cheeks with her forepaws. She reserved this caress for her mistress almost exclusively, making a rare exception in favor

of her master, but for nobody else save once, memorably, for Mr. Henry James. It was very rapid, very endearing, and had a touch of condescension about it which was characteristic of her attitude toward man and beast.

Graceful as the race is proverbially, she and Czarina were incomparable in their gambols, of which in summer the lawn and garden were the scene. They were fond of playing with the daffodils, of sitting on their hind legs and clapping their paws in vain attempts to catch the butterflies, of frisking with their own shadows, and other exquisite antics. Princess possessed the arts of wheedling to an irresistible degree, and knew very well who was accessible to them. At table she used to mount on her master's shoulder and coax him for the food on its way to his lips, when she did not adroitly whisk it off his fork. She made no such advances to her mistress, having too much discernment. She was impatient, and could not bear to wait, and in the morning, while her mistress was dressing, would ask to be let in and out incessantly, because she was in haste for breakfast. At last the rule was established that, if she were let out, she must stay out. She tried scratching at the door, and, not being readmitted, went to the outer door of her master's room, scratched, got in, and ran straight through the door of communication to her mistress. Thenceforth she always got back by this device.

She was not the only cat to find out who was the softer-hearted. Whenever her mistress was away, if only at one meal, Princess and any of her kind who represented the dynasty at the moment were on the dining-table as soon as the master of the house took his place, insisting on having their plate on table, too. If I had been away for over a year, the day I returned the cats resumed their wonted propriety of their own accord. Yet it was I they preferred, and Princess's attachment grew more ardent and her necessity for my presence more imperative with years. Her feelings would almost overpower her at times, and then she would press her soft muzzle deep into my cheek, like human lips silently pressed without a kiss, as if sealed there. And her amber eyes would deepen into a gaze of love and devotion, with something indefinable beneath, which I remembered when years afterward I read Tourguénieff's prose poem to his dog, "Two souls in that room, my dog and I." This it was that stamped Princess with a distinct superiority, and gave me a sense of companionship in her such as does not belong to her race. She and Lalla Rookh made the doctrine of transmigration of souls comprehensible. In some odd way she was aware of this, and gained for herself the unique footing of a rational brute. She did not associate with other cats, or with any human being but ourselves, though she knew our intimate friends and visitors and gave them signs of recognition. She disliked the third member of our small family, as he teased her; but, although he was away from home three-quarters of the year, she acknowledged his position and made a difference between him and persons who were at the house more often than he.

Her master and mistress once both being absent for more than a month, Princess passed the time in the bedroom, coming down only for her meals and her regular walks. The obnoxious member of the family arrived toward the end of the period, upon which she at once came downstairs and sat in the room with him, though neither making overtures to him nor receiving his, but, like a self-respecting cat, she made herself clean and presentable. As a rule, she did not run to meet us on our arrival, as dogs do, but would approach coyly, rubbing herself against the furniture until she was near enough to jump upon our knees. After this month's absence, however, as we crossed our threshold, she came downstairs like a flurry of snow, sprang into the arms of her mistress, and lay there limp and nerveless, with drooping limbs, panting with sobs which shook her from head to foot. She was emaciated, and her face worn and drawn,—an expression it did not lose for some days. She had been pining to death, and we felt that, if she were left by both of us again for any time, we should lose her. She never was thus forsaken, for she died of heat stroke the following summer, when she was seven years old, in the historical "yellow days" of September, 1881.—*Mrs. C. L. Wister.*

THE EARL OF SHAFTESBURY.

The special Sunday evening services at Exeter Hall, inaugurated by Lord Shaftesbury and the "Palmerston Bishops," had proved successful beyond all anticipation. The interest in the services, instead of flagging, grew greater every Sunday, and it was now a question how to extend similar efforts,

so that, on the one hand, the lowest of the low, the classes to whom the gospel was never, or very rarely, preached, could be gathered together, and, on the other hand, how an interest in the gospel could be awakened in the middle and upper classes who had "cared for none of these things." To reach the latter, a series of special evening services was held in Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral, and for the former Sunday evening services were commenced in the theatres of the metropolis.

In the theatre services Lord Shaftesbury took the greatest possible interest. They were founded by him. He stood at the helm to direct the progress of the whole movement: he bore the brunt of the whole movement. He bore the brunt of the battle in their defence, and he reaped the harvest that was sown, inasmuch as the good that was done was done to those who belonged to himself,—the poor, the wretched, and the abandoned.

In January, 1860, five theatres were opened for religious worship. . . . By the middle of February seven theatres were opened, and the average attendance was 20,700 each night.

Lord Shaftesbury frequently "assisted" in the services at the various theatres. It was a strange sight that met his gaze as he looked in at the theatre, just before he attended the first service there. Stranger still, as he stood upon the stage, facing the footlights, Bible in hand, and read a chapter of the "sweet story of old." From floor to ceiling the vast house was thronged. In boxes, stalls, pit, and gallery were costermongers, street cadgers, and laborers, women in fluttering rags, many with babies in their arms, boys in shirt-sleeves and corduroys, young men and maidens in their gaudy "Sunday best," and here and there a few persons in attire denoting that they belonged to the "better" classes. At the opening of the service there had been much confusion. No shrill whistles, no slang cries or cat-calls, no roars of laughter, as on the evenings when the audience waited for the curtain to rise on some blood-thirsty melodrama, but conversation, interspersed with disputes about room or priority of claim. When the first hymn was sung, there had again been some little confusion. It was a novelty to the people. The simple lively airs of the American evangelists had not yet been heard. When, therefore, the first verse of the Old Hundred was attempted, it fell flat, and seemed to provoke merriment. The words of the hymn were not known, a vast number of the people could not read, many had no idea of tune, still more had no idea of time. But, before the fourth verse had finished, many who had hitherto been shy of lifting up their voices, or were unfamiliar with the tune, joined in, and the fifth verse concluded with a triumphant roar.

When the opening prayer was offered, a few attempted to kneel, a large number buried their faces in their hands or their hats, or, in the front rows, laid their heads on their sleeveless jackets, some turned their backs to the stage and some to the gallery; but throughout the whole house the silence was intense, solemn, and striking.

There was a buzz of approbation when Lord Shaftesbury rose to read the lessons, but there was good taste enough in the audience to confine itself to that quiet demonstration of approval.

It is recorded in the book of Nehemiah that, when on a great historical occasion the people were gathered together to hear the Book of the Law, the priests "read in the book of the law of God *distinctly*, and *gave the sense*, and caused them to *understand the reading*." This is exactly what Lord Shaftesbury did, and what so very many ministers unhappily fail to do. He was an excellent reader, and, whether to the little village congregation at St. Giles's, where he invariably read the lessons when staying at his country seat, or in the vast theatres of London, where for many years he frequently did the same, he "caused the people to understand," and thereby touched their hearts and consciences.

The strangest sight of all, that night, was seen when the preacher, having given out a text, told the simple story of the gospel of Christ. The people listened with extraordinary attention, as if they had never heard of the subject before; and, as one of the preachers, at these theatre services, describing a similar occasion, said, "Down their pale cheeks, that had once blushed, and from their eyes still retaining their lustre, tears flow, and occasionally, over all the audience, a stillness reigns that proves reality to be more effective than fiction, and the story of a cross erected on a Judæan hill, 1,800 years ago, to have lost none of its power."

It soon became apparent that these services were accomplishing a vast amount of good. They attracted thousands of the poor, whose rags and tatters prevented them, even if they had the desire, from attending the regular places of worship. They stood in

relation to churches as Ragged Schools stood in relation to other places of education. Their scope is described by Lord Shaftesbury thus:—

"To aid the progress of the general improvement is the object of these special services. No one contemplates them as a permanent system. . . . We hope to bring thousands of our ignorant and neglected brethren to think about Christianity. Having learned it, they will, we trust, pursue it, and, rising above their attendance at the theatre, attach themselves to the Church of England, or some one or other of the recognized and established forms of worship.

"Their humanizing effects are already manifest in the language, manners, and appearance of those who frequent them. This is no wonder, for matters of such deep and vital interest can never be altogether without their fruits. With many it may be transitory. With a few it may be lasting, but utterly ineffectual these services cannot be."

It need hardly be said that these religious services in theatres did not meet with universal approval. On February 24 (1860), in the House of Lords, Lord Dungannon rose "to call attention to the performance of divine service at Sadler's Wells and other theatres by clergymen of the Church of England on Sunday evenings, and to move a resolution that such services, being highly irregular and inconsistent with order, are calculated to injure rather than advance the progress of sound religious principles in the metropolis and throughout the country."

Lord Shaftesbury, "the only culprit in the House, and one of the principal movers in originating these services," replied. His speech was one of the most novel and interesting of its kind ever heard in that august house. For two or three hours his audience were riveted, as, in picturesque language and with unsurpassed earnestness, he told the whole story of the movement. He met the argument, that between these services and the associations connected with a theatre there was an utter incongruity, by explaining that the class of people attending them had the greatest repugnance to either a church or chapel; that everything had been done to procure other buildings, but without success; and, although music halls might have been hired, these places were rejected because in almost every instance they were connected with taverns. He denied that there had been any disorder of any kind at any of the services, and quoted letters from Sir Richard Mayne, the chief of the police, testifying that at every service the people had conducted themselves with the greatest propriety. Lord Shaftesbury examined the argument of opponents that these services tended to draw people from the churches and chapels they ordinarily attended, and refuted it by abundant letters from clergymen and ministers of churches in the neighborhood of the theatres. He utterly denied, from personal experience, the charge of Lord Dungannon, that "ginger-beer bottles were opened and oranges cried during divine worship." . . . After attending for three evenings at the Victoria Theatre, he could say:—

"From the beginning to the end of the service, no assembly could have been more orderly, more apparently devout, and more anxious to catch every word that fell from the preacher's lips. On one of the occasions, so solemn and touching was the discourse of the preacher, and so moved were many of the wildest and roughest present, that, when, after the benediction, they rose to leave the building, they went so quietly and slowly that you could hardly hear the sound of a footfall."—*From the "Life of the Earl of Shaftesbury," by Hodder.*

LETTERS OF A SISTER.

To her Brother, James Freeman Clarke.

NEWTON, July 19, 1837(?)

My dear James,—I hope you received the letter that I wrote you from Buffalo. I tried to go and see Mr. and Mrs. Hosmer, but there was no time. I obtained the direction to his house, which I found was a mile off; and, as we had less than an hour before the cars left for Niagara, I was afraid to venture to look for him lest I should detain the party or be left behind myself, which would be hardly less unpleasant. Our party consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Bush of Philadelphia, Miss Hubbard of Middletown, Conn., and her brother-in-law, Dr. Castleman, formerly of Louisville. Miss Hubbard, the doctor, and myself went directly on Goat Island, and down to the corner of the American Fall, which was the first glimpse we caught of the world's wonder. I was surprised that I could approach it so familiarly, and even put my hand in and take a pebble from the bed of the torrent. It seemed like laying one's hand upon the lion's mane. Then we went down the Biddle

staircase, and, leaving Miss Hubbard, who is an invalid, at its foot, we proceeded along the rocks till we came near the British Fall. The sense of hope fulfilled, the scene around so gay and grand, the elastic atmosphere, and the clear, rushing torrent with its deep harmonies, all contributed their share, I suppose, to raise my spirits, for I was more exhilarated than I can remember ever to have been before. An irresistible attraction drew me on toward the focus of all these beauties; and, if I had been alone, perhaps you might never have known what became of your sister. We returned to the house thoroughly wetted, and after dinner crossed the ferry. Many coaches were in waiting to take us to view the wonders of the British side; but an Irishman, who mentioned *Lundy's Lane* among the rest, prevailed with us. He took us to the battle-ground, and showed us the spot where the bodies were burned and buried, and we found a party of school-boys there digging for buttons. I obtained an American button which I brought home to mother. He took us to the Burning Spring, and then we went down to Table Rock. It was now almost night, but we resolved to go under the Fall, and I was afterward glad that we did, for I should never have felt the truly sublime if I had not. By this time I felt completely depressed, and the strange awkward dress chilled me,—the awful overhanging rocks, the pigmy footpath, the sulphurous smell, and the approaching darkness awed me, and, when in the midst of the choking spray, my heart entirely failed me, and I tried to retreat; but the guide would not hear of it, and those behind would not let me go back, so I had to go on quite against my will, and I was never more glad than when we reached Termination Rock, and were allowed to return. How majestic is the Niagara River, which rolls on with one motion, unbroken by waves and rapids, seeming as if its waters had acquired dignity in their fall! So sublime a natural object becomes a spoken word of God, and the elements of it have become consecrated by this use. The waters above seem so like a beautiful, unconscious child which has no fear of the instant future, and below so like a strong man possessed with an earnest purpose. I know you think it unnatural to find a moral in a natural object, but here it came upon me with all the force of truth. We stayed three days: the last was Sunday, a perfect day in point of weather. The morning I spent upon Goat Island, and in the afternoon went to the Whirlpool. The next morning we left the Falls, and after stage, railroad, and canal found ourselves Thursday morning at Albany. The North River was all new to me in itself as well as in the character of its scenery. It comes up more to my idea of *romantic* than anything I have before seen. Before sunset we reached New York, which looked as beautiful as evening sunshine can make a city look. Here I took leave of my kind friends, and went to pass the night at Miss Cowing's. William McLellan is living there, and waited upon me very kindly. I went to see Mrs. Field. She has two more pictures which are most beautiful. As far as I can judge they are less like copies than the others. One is from Leonardo da Vinci's "Vanity and Modesty," and is what you would like to see particularly. The delicate discrimination of character is admirable. The other is a very large picture, a Magdalen by Guido, large as life and grand beyond expression. Mrs. Field's daughter Ella was married a fortnight before to Mr. Jay, the son of the Abolitionist. He is twenty and she eighteen. She has beautiful miniatures of them. When you come on again, go and see her. I tried to find where William Channing was staying, to go and see his wife, but could not find out. I left my card at Francis's bookstore, hoping he might come in that day, and as I was close by call and see me. Friday evening at five o'clock I went on board the steamboat, and before eight the next morning was at Aunt McLellan's house in Boston. That is the most rapid travelling I have yet met with unless across the Lakes, five days and six nights from Chicago to Buffalo, might compare with it.

I had been in the house but a few minutes before Sam came in, half expecting me that morning, and he took me home. It is even more painful to return home, I think, than to go away, the excitement is so much greater. From the time of setting my foot in New York till it was all over I felt horridly. I found Sarah Campbell gladdening Newton with her presence. She has the character of being fascinating, and is a true little Southerner in her feelings and in her prejudices.

We went to Cambridge the day of the Class Poem and Oration, and there I saw Mr. Osgood a moment. We had returned home but a few minutes when he arrived following us. He says Mr. Frothingham was somewhat

hurt by your allusion; but he said he could have borne that, but not Mr. ——'s defence. It seems the universal opinion that your defence was quite satisfactory; but I see that he has the impudence to pretend, after all, that he is right. That amounts to nothing, however, of course; and I think it is not worth while to say anything more about it. I think you managed it admirably.

SARAH.

THE AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

[Address everything relating to the Amusement Column to Miss Kate L. Watson, Post-office Box 57, Worcester, Mass. Contributors are requested to write on one side of the paper only. Write name and address *plainly* (not necessarily for publication), and send the answers to the puzzles on a separate slip of paper.]

A Game for Out-of-doors.

"Follow me" is a pretty game for recess, though it may be played on the lawn or in a large parlor. We wish we could give the music, but almost any child with a musical ear can find the time to fit the following words.

Suppose Mary is the leader. She walks up to another girl (Ada), and sings or chants:—

"Follow, follow, follow, follow,
Will you come and follow me?"

Ada sings,—

"Whither shall I follow, follow, follow, follow,
Whither shall I follow thee?"

Mary sings,—

"To the beautiful green-wood, green-wood,
To the beautiful green-wood tree."

Ada rises at the word "tree," and follows Mary till they come to the girl of her choice, perhaps Margaret. Then Mary slips behind Ada, who sings, "Follow, follow, follow," and the game proceeds as before, the procession growing longer until all are in it, the last one chosen being at the head, when they march around the playground or from room to room. If there is a beautiful green-wood tree for the rendezvous, all the better. If not, it may be represented by a wreath of evergreen or green tissue paper. When they come to it, they join hands and dance in a "fairy ring" till they are tired, when they suddenly disperse.

I.

A Child's Riddle.

It is said that a little girl twelve years old was taken captive by the Indians. They were so touched by her beauty, intelligence, and homesickness, they promised that, if she could make a riddle that they could not guess, they would take her back to her people. She gave the following; and, as they were unable to guess it, they kept their promise:—

"Riddle, come riddle, come riddle, come right.
What did I see last Friday night?
It was neither wild nor tame,
And from the dead the lining came.
Five there were, and six there'll be,
What was this that I did see?"

II.

Easy Numerical Enigma.

I am a word of twelve letters.

My 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, the editors will do to any one who sends an answer to this enigma.

My 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, we should all be, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, every day of the year, not one day only.

My whole is not always kept in the spirit which its name indicates.

III.

Charade.

My first bends graceful by a spring;
My next has conquered many a king;
My whole to frost and ice and snow
Of winter adds another woe.

—*A Century of Charades.*

IV.

Square Word.

Here is a word square which reads the same, up or down, from left to right or from right to left:—

1. A girl's name. 2. A part of the day. 3. Same as second. 4. Same as first.

—*The Invalid Lady.*

V.

Anagrams: Names of Popular Books.

1. Made a bed. 2. I exist, sexton. 3. What heroine? 4. A green linen rag, lad. 5. Fairy tail. 6. I'll work, then.

VI.

Conundrums.

1. Plant a calendar, and what will come up?
2. Plant cloves, and what will come up?
3. Plant two pins, and what will come up?

A Suggestion.—Try how many anagrams you can make from the word "Tam-o'-shanter." After sending the eight which appeared in the July number, our friend the Invalid Lady made twelve more, equally good, which will appear in our next. Can any one make any more, or find another name with equal possibilities?

Answers to Puzzles in October Number.

I. Rapidan.

II. Rearrange the punctuation marks.

III. 1. Me cry: mercy. 2. Angles: angels. 3. Canada: can Ada.

IV. Seven.

V. They were toe-nails.

VI. Six dozen dozen is 864: half a dozen dozen is 72. The difference is 792. 2. Because it cannot be used until it is broken. 3. When he is a little Pat.

The game, "What is my thought like?" is asked for. Will some one describe it? It is unknown to the editor of the Amusement Column.

Rev. C. F. Dykeman, Dakota, Minnesota, would be very glad to receive any of the works of John Lothrop Motley.

Mrs. Eugenia Palmer, Larue, Texas, sends thanks for reading received. She has a Travelling Library on hand, and enjoys it very much.

The Editor suggests that those who ask for magazines should mention whether they are willing to receive old and odd numbers or whether it is only the current numbers that they desire.

A CORRECTION.

The answer to the milk-can puzzle in September number was not quite correct. There are two versions of the puzzle, and the answers got mixed. It should have been: "Fill the three-quart can, and from that fill the two-quart can. There will be one quart left in the three-quart can."

Our sweet illusions only die
Fulfilling love's sure prophecy;
And every wish for better things
An undreamed beauty nearer brings.

Whittier.

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

The Cheerful Letter Exchange will arrange for lessons by correspondence in such subjects as are desired by those without school facilities, who would like to take up a course of study in this manner. It is believed that much practical help can thus be given.

Will those who would like to receive such instruction send their requests to Mrs. C. L. Stebbins, 52 Fayette Street, Cambridge, Mass., stating the subjects in which they wish instruction?

THE ATTENTION OF ALL READERS OF "THE CHEERFUL LETTER" IS CALLED TO THE FOLLOWING NOTICE:—

It is contrary to the rules of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to allow any one to make use of our paper by addressing letters, asking for money, clothing, or other articles, to those whose names are printed in the paper. This prohibition includes requests to borrow money and the offering of articles for sale. The name of any person who infringes this rule will be dropped from our list; and any one who receives a request of this description is desired by our Executive Committee to return no answer, but to enclose the letter at once to Mrs. W. B. Nichols.

Until further notice the begging letters, formerly sent to Miss Langmaid, may go to our Book Club Secretary, Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 2 Kensington Park, Roxbury, Mass.

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Those not able to subscribe for the paper, but desiring to receive it, may do so by writing to Mrs. Catlin, as above. Please give full name and address. Also send name of minister as reference. Some of our members take the paper in order to send it to those who are not able to subscribe for it.